

**Subject: Testimony in Opposition to SB 1105**

Members of the Education Committee, I would like to share with you my experience with my severely autistic son and the power of properly supervised behavioral therapy.

At 7 years old, my son was a very angry and difficult child. Nonverbal and frustrated, he was in a program run by well-meaning professional educators that had isolated him in a classroom by himself with one other therapist. He cried when he had to go to school in the morning and was increasingly lashing out towards teachers, therapist and family.

Upon moving to the Locust Street School, under the care of a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, his entire persona brightened. After studying his behaviors, changing the environment and doing a functional behavior analysis, a behavior plan was implemented skillfully and uniformly across staff and shared with family. Specific skills were targeted, beginning skill level documented and progress carefully and quantitatively monitored.

Today my son is still severely autistic and is only semi-verbal, but the list of skills he possess is extensive. A child that was too frightened to go into a restaurant, too angry to work with therapists, too unpredictable to work with others today at 17 years old is a polite and happy young man that participates in Special Olympics, vocational training, church activities, and bowling. He is independent in his personal hygiene and able to make salads, set the table, make his bed, help with laundry, washing the car and a multitude of chores. The positive impact on his life and the life of our entire family has been remarkable.

Under the strong guidance of a board certified behavior analyst, a well implemented behavioral program measures, monitors and corrects skills and behaviors. The pieces and steps may seem simple, but success absolutely requires detailed and rigid personal discipline of execution of the steps of this process. The idea that a practitioner not properly certified can be successful flies in the face of real certified case studies.

There is clearly a force within education that does not accept scientific research and spurns scientifically proven fact. Following this path will hurt thousands of disabled children in Connecticut. I urge you to vote against SB1105.